

Reports of meetings

The Asia Pacific Association of Medical Journal Editors (APAME 2013) Convention

Tokyo, 2 – 4 August, 2013



A brief history

The APAME is the result of important activities of the World Health Organization (WHO). In 2006, the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific developed and launched the Western

Pacific Regional Index Medicus (WPRIM) with the mission of sharing and exchanging health knowledge in the Region as one part of an important project to establish a virtual Global Health Library (GHL). The first WPRIM meeting was held in Beijing in December 2006, where a recommendation was made to establish associations of medical journal editors in all countries of the Region, with the mission to improve journal publishing quality. The Korean Association of Medical Journal Editors (KAMJE) was founded as early as 1996, followed by the Japanese Association of Medical Journal Editors (JAMJE) in 2008, then associations in Mongolia, Singapore, the Philippines and Malaysia (founded in 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2011, respectively).

The idea to establish a regional hub for editorial activities occurred in 2007 at a meeting of WPRIM, and APAME was formally established the following year (both these meetings were held in Seoul, Republic of Korea) to enable contact and collaboration among editors, reviewers, librarians and publishers of scientific journals. APAME obtained its constitution and officers, and began its remarkable activities aimed at access to quality health information in the Region. Close collaboration with the Regional Office of WHO resulted in launching a platform for WPRIM (2010).

APAME activities soon expanded, and at the convention in 2012 (held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), editors, reviewers, librarians and publishers of scientific journals in the South-East Asia Region (with 11 member states) were invited to join the group of 37 countries of the Western Pacific Region. APAME holds its annual conventions at different locations in the Region. An online digital archive and reference-linking platform for medical journal articles was launched in September 2012 as APAMED Central (<http://apamedcentral.org>), equivalent to PubMed Central in the USA.

APAME's mission is to contribute to the improvement of health in the Asia Pacific Region by ensuring the quality of health-related information published in medical journals that should help in better decision-making and effective delivery of health services.

The 2013 Convention

The first day was devoted to the WPRIM/APAME General

Assembly, and APAME meeting for West Pacific Region and South East Pacific Region delegates. They discussed reports from the Journal Selection Committee, Education Committee, and a draft of the Tokyo Declaration on Research Integrity and Ethical Publication in Science and Medicine in the Asia Pacific Region, which was prepared for publication and signed by all participants.

Several projects were mentioned, such as the Institute of Medical Information at the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, which also collaborates with WHO information resources. In 2012, WHO launched the Institutional Repository for Information Sharing, which enables multilingual access to the complete collection of WHO publications over 60 years. In collaboration with HINARI (Research4Life), libraries are being created and interconnected, including with WPRIM. Of special interest are original papers about public health. Among future steps will be the development of the IRIS platform, the creation of offline libraries for Pacific Islands, and continuing support to WPRIM. The WHO is organizing writing workshops as well as standardizing materials for courses (training the trainers, training the editors and reviewers).

Countries in the region have their specific needs, for example, Sri Lanka has 17 medical journals but no umbrella expert committee, while Myanmar with 3 medical journals that are "regularly irregular" in publication needs to enhance editorial skills and training workshops for editors. Similar needs are felt in Bangladesh and India.

The information systems are improving, for example the WPRIM database is growing quickly, from about 412 000 items in December 2012 to more than 634 000 in July 2013. There is a need to complete the selection criteria for inclusion of journals as well as to prepare guidelines for suspension of journals from the list.

The programme for all attendees began on 3 August. It was an APAME/JAMJE joint session, opened by Professor Kyioshi Kitamura, the President of APAME and Chair of the Organizing Committee of JAMJE. He explained the aims of the convention, "to promote collaboration among editors, authors, researchers, librarians and publishers of academic medical journals and, to upgrade the quality of scholarly publications in medicine and health sciences in the Asia Pacific Region."

The first plenary lecture was on Science, Communication and Integrity in the Third Millennium (E. Baranyiová), seeking links between the goals, achievements, but also failures in medicine on the one hand, and pressures experienced by scientists that might result in various types of unethical behaviour with far-reaching consequences in the area of public health and the social sphere. Several approaches to remedy the situation were presented.

Session 1 covered “Clinical trial registry and responsible conduct of research in view of universal health care”, from the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Japan. The speakers were: Merlita Opeña, Hyun-Young Park, Kiichiro Tsutani, Masayuki Saijo and Iekuni Ichikawa. A new stage in the history of both Pacific regions was mentioned, with local projects presented, such as the Health Research and Development Information Network database (www.herdin.ph), launched in 2012, the national health research repository of the Philippines with 50 000 citations and bibliographic information from both published and unpublished (research projects, reports, theses and dissertations) materials. The Korean Clinical Trial Registration System (CRIS) is financially supported by the government; 20% of its use is from abroad. The Japanese UMIN-Clinical Trial Registry was launched in 2005 and now includes 11 378 items). Unintended use of research results and responsibility of editorial boards in connection with safety and biosecurity clearance was another topic. E-learning of research ethics was presented as important in view of growing research misconduct, also in the Pacific region, alluding to the most recent case of the retraction of a paper reporting on a Novartis drug. Mention was made of the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) based at the University of Miami, Florida, USA., but available worldwide. Its mission is “*To promote the public’s trust in the research enterprise by providing high quality, peer reviewed, web based, research education materials to enhance the integrity and professionalism of investigators and staff conducting research.*” Interestingly, when searching the website (<http://www.citiprogram.org>), one finds the CITI Programmes in Canada, India, Japan, Korea, and USA - but not Europe.

There was a short seminar on the Creative Commons License (Takako Sota), a non-profit organization with the mission to promote the development of culture by allowing free use of work, while respecting the intentions of the authors.

The following two sessions were devoted to COPE (speakers Chris Graf, Hitoshi Nakagama, Tetsuya Tanimoto, Jeong-Wook Seo, Atsushi Manabe, Jeong-Ho Kim, Chong-Woo Bae). The importance of COPE, established in 1997, was shown, with its growing number of members (now around 8 500) in many disciplines. Several case reports followed, and it was stated that technology in detecting misconduct is useful only with human surveillance. Authors should not doubt the power of technology to detect plagiarism. Case studies from *Pediatrics International* show 33% submissions from Japan, 24% from Turkey, 13% from Europe, and 7% from the Republic of Korea; when the journal rejects manuscripts for attempted duplicate publication, the authors are banned for 3 years. There was a discussion about a global blacklist of such authors. In the Republic of Korea, 177 medical journals are published, and a total of 228 covering other sciences. PubMed covers only 73 and Scopus 71 of them. Early detection of plagiarism saves the time of editors. It was reported that using the logo of CrossCheck proved useful in reducing the numbers of plagiarized articles. KAMJE has shown a proactive approach to publication problems in that it organized a campaign to reduce duplicate/plagiarized manuscripts: the proportion decreased from 5.93% in 2004 to 1.19% in 2009.

Plenary lecture 2 (Kiyoshi Kitamura) presented some world trends in medical education, contacts among doctors and patients, quality of care as reflected in the definition of standards by the World Federation of Medical Education, accreditation, databases etc. Medical education and its trilogy (basic, post-graduate and continuing) in the context of medical writing and ethics education were mentioned, along with current reforms of the system in Japan. There was a parallel session on Open Access (speakers Jeong-Wook Seo, D. Khan, M.W. Partow, and others) analysing its different styles, its impact on scholarly publishing and future directions. E-libraries and E-journals were discussed in another parallel session, as was promotion of medical journals in different countries.

The last day saw several reports on editorial/reporting guidelines and peer review (speakers Jennie Greaney, Eric Healy, John Arokiasamy, Wilfred Peh, Sung-Tae Hong, Anita Jain, Tao Dai, J.F. Lapeña), regional training, practical issues on how to target a relevant journal, transparency of the publication process, etc. The usefulness of the free Equator Network was stressed with various available guidelines. Peer review problems in China were mentioned, due to inadequate technological support, inadequate peer experts, poor communication among editors and reviewers, and lack of review standards. A proposal was made for sharing reviewers among APAME countries.

The poster session had 16 posters, showing the current status of medical publishing in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Mongolia. Several individual journals (from Singapore, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines) were presented. One realizes that only a fraction of knowledge accumulated in this dynamic region of the world is known and acknowledged in worldwide science databases. The paramount role of the WHO and its regional offices in closing the information gap among various regions of the world was noticeable during the entire Convention. There were more than 250 participants from 17 countries, most of them journal editors of 81 Japanese medical societies, also representatives of the WHO regional offices, Biomed Central, Medknow Publications and Wiley.

The chance to participate at the APAME meeting was an excellent experience for me. The enthusiasm that could be felt at this Convention is a valuable asset that will help us all to address some negative developments in science publishing that have become more prevalent in recent years. There is a good chance for EASE to be involved with APAME, extend our collaboration, and produce a real network of contacts useful for all.

This event has shown that problems in biomedical sciences are similar around the globe, but in this region the developments in the field of science information are rapid, profound and dynamic. They are a real challenge for Europe.

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